AMENDMENT OF SOLICITATION/MODIFICATION OF CONTRACT

1. Contract Number	Page of Pages 1	2

2. Amendment/Modification Number	3. Effective Date	4. Requisition/Purchase Request No.	5. Solicitation Caption
DCJZ-2007-R-0002-M002	See Block #16C		Education Program at Oak Hill

6. Issued By: Code	7. Administered By (If other than line 6)
Office of Conracting and Procurement (OCP) Group IV 441 4th Street, NW, Suite 700S Washington, DC 20001	Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP) Bid Counter 441 4th Street, Suite 7003S Washington, D.C. 20001

8. Name and Address of Contractor (No. Street, city, country, state and ZIP Code)	(X)	9A. Amendment of Solicitation No.
		DCJZ-2007-R-0002
		9B. Dated (See Item 11) 1/19/2007
		10A. Modification of Contract/Order No.
		10B. Dated (See Item 13)
Code Facility		

11. THIS ITEM ONLY APPLIES TO AMENDMENTS OF SOLICITATIONS

[X] The above numbered solicitation is amended as set forth in Item 14. The hour and date specified for receipt of Offers [X] is extended. [ ] is not extended.
Offers must acknowledge receipt of this amendment prior to the hour and date specified in the solicitation or as amended, by one of the following methods: (a) By completing Items 8 and 15, and returning 5 copies of the amendment: (b) By acknowledging receipt of this amendment on each copy of the offer submitted; or (c) By separate letter or fax which includes a reference to the solicitation and amendment number. FAILURE OF YOUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO BE RECEIVED AT THE PLACE DESIGNATED FOR THE RECEIPT OF OFFERS PRIOR TO THE HOUR AND DATE SPECIFIED MAY RESULT IN REJECTION OF YOUR OFFER. If by virtue of this amendment you desire to change an offer already submitted, such change may be made by letter or fax, provided each letter or telegram makes reference to the solicitation and this amendment, and is received prior to the opening hour and date specified.

12. Accounting and Appropriation Data (If Required)

13. THIS ITEM APPLIES ONLY TO MODIFICATIONS OF CONTRACTS/ORDERS,
IT MODIFIES THE CONTRACT/ORDER NO. AS DESCRIBED IN ITEM 14

	A. This change order is issued pursuant to: (Specify Authority) The changes set forth in Item 14 are made in the contract/order no. in item 10A.
	B. The above numbered contract/order is modified to reflect the administrative changes (such as changes in paying office, appropriation date, etc.) set forth in item 14, pursuant to the authority of 27 DCMR, Chapter 36, Section 3601.2.
	C. This supplemental agreement is entered into pursuant to authority of:
	D. Other (Specify type of modification and authority)

E. IMPORTANT: Contractor [ ] is not, [ ] is required to sign this document and return _____ copies to the issuing office.

14. Description of amendment/modification (Organized by UCF Section headings, including solicitation/contract subject matter where feasible.)

Solicitation Number DCJZ-2007-R-0002 for an Education Program for Committed Male Youth at the Oak Hill Youth Center is hereby modified as follows:

1. Page One (1), Item six (6), Type of Market: Delete "X" in box beside "Open" and insert "X" in box beside "Open with Sub-Contracting Set Aside".

2. Page one (1) Item nine (9): Extend the deadline for submission of proposals to 2:00 p.m. Local Time, February 22, 2007.

3. Delete Section B.3, Price Schedule, in its entirety. Replace with Attachment A, Section B.3, Price Schedule

4. Delete Section C.3.5 in its entirety. Replace with: C.3.5: "The Contractor's education program shall be referred to as the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) School. DYRS shall be considered as a local education agency (LEA) in providing the required services."

Continued on Page 2

Except as provided herein, all terms and conditions of the document referenced in Item (9A or 10A) remain unchanged and in full force and effect

15A. Name and Title of Signer (Type or print)		16A. Name of Contracting Officer	
15B. Name of Contractor (Signature of person authorized to sign)	15C. Date Signed	16B. District of Columbia Hans Paeffgen, Contracting Officer (Signature of Contracting Officer)	16C. Date Signed 02/12/07

5. Page 17, Section C.3.9: Delete: "The Contractor shall be accredited" and replace with "The Contractor shall have DYRS School accredited through DYRS…"

6. Page 28: Add the following after Section C.3.32.5.3:

   a. C.3.32.5.4 "Assistance with transportation to and from internship programs, prospective employers and post and secondary education sites";

   b. C.3.32.5.5 "Licensed registered or licensed practical nursing services to provide basic health care services to youth in the Community-Based Reintegration Program"; and

   c. C.3.32.5.6 "School meals in accordance with nutritional guidelines set by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and ensure that the food service provider performs in accordance with the USDA required meal patterns listed in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7, Chapter II, Subpart E, Section 226.20 and DC Official Code, Title 48, Subtitle I (Food) Chapter I, Section 48-104."

7. Page 38: Add the following after C.3.39.13.13: C.3.39.13.14 **"Food Handler:** The Contractor's food handler shall have a valid Food Handler's Certificate issued by the District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs."

8. The responses to the vendors' pre-proposal questions are included in this amendment as Attachment B.

B.3 PRICE SCHEDULE

B.3.1 *BASE PERIOD YEAR ONE*

CLIN	ITEM DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	UNIT	QUANTITY	TOTAL ANNUAL PRICE
0001	Provide services for the transfer of the operation for the Education Program at the Oak Hill Youth Center secure facility from the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) to the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) in accordance with Sections **C.3.1, C.3.2** and **C.3.44**		Month	2	
0002	Provide an Education Program that includes a core academic instruction and an extended day program for approximately 90 committed male youth at the Oak Hill Youth Center secure facility in accordance with Sections **C (**Base *Period Year 1- 2007-2008)*		Month	8-1/2	
0003	Provide a summer school program for approximately 90 committed male youth at the Oak Hill Youth Center secure facility in accordance with Section **C. (**Base *Period Year 1- 2007-2008)*		Month	1-1/2	
0004	Provide a community-based re-integration program for approximately 30 youth at any given time for up to 90 days per youth in accordance with Section **C.** (Base *Period Year 1- 2007-2008)*		Month	7	
0005	**Cost Reimbursement Ceiling for small furnishings and equipment of a cost of not more than $500.00 per item**				**$20,000.00**

B.3.2 ***BASE PERIOD YEAR TWO***

CLIN	ITEM DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	UNIT	QUANTITY	TOTAL ANNUAL PRICE
0006	Provide an Education Program that includes a core academic instruction, an extended day program and a summer school program for approximately 60 committed male youth at the Oak Hill Youth Center secure facility in accordance with Section **C** (Base *Period Year 2- 2008-2009)*		Month	12	
0007	Provide a community-based re-integration program for approximately 30 youth at any given time for up to 90 days per youth in accordance with Section **C** (Base *Period Year 2- 2008-2009)*		Month	12	
0008	**Cost Reimbursement Ceiling for small furnishings and equipment of a cost of not more than $500.00 per item**				**$10,000.00**

B.3.1 ***BASE PERIOD YEAR THREE***

CLIN	ITEM DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	UNIT	QUANTITY	TOTAL ANNUAL PRICE
0009	Provide an Education Program that includes a core academic instruction, an extended day program and a summer school program for approximately 60 committed male youth at the Oak Hill Youth Center secure facility in accordance with Section **C** (Base *Period Year 3- 2009-20010)*		Month	12	
00010	Provide a community-based re-integration program for approximately 30 youth at any given time for up to 90 days per youth in accordance with Sections **C.** (Base *Period Year 3- 2009-20010)*		Month	12	
00011	**Cost Reimbursement Ceiling for small furnishings and equipment of a cost of not more than $500.00 per item**				**$10,000.00**
Total for Base Period					

B.3.2 ***OPTION PERIOD YEAR ONE***

CLIN	ITEM DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	UNIT	QUANTITY	TOTAL ANNUAL PRICE
1001	Provide an Education Program that includes a core academic instruction, an extended day program and a summer school program for approximately 60 committed male youth at the Oak Hill Youth Center secure facility in accordance with Section **C**. (Option *Period Year 1- 20010-20011)*		Month	12	
1002	Provide a community-based re-integration program for approximately 30 youth at any given time for up to 90 days per youth in accordance with **Sections C.** (Option *Period Year 1- 20010-20011)*		Month	12	
1003	**Cost Reimbursement Ceiling for small furnishings and equipment of a cost of not more than $500.00 per item**				**$10,000.00**

B.3.2 ***OPTION PERIOD YEAR TWO***

CLIN	ITEM DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	UNIT	QUANTITY	TOTAL ANNUAL PRICE
1004	Provide an Education Program that includes a core academic instruction, an extended day program and a summer school program for approximately 60 committed male youth at the Oak Hill Youth Center secure facility in accordance with Section **C.** (Option *Period Year2- 20011-20012)*		Month	12	
1005	Provide a community-based re-integration program for approximately 30 youth at any given time for 90 days per youth in accordance with Section **C.** (Option *Period Year 2- 20011-20012)*		Month	12	
1006	**Cost Reimbursement Ceiling for small furnishings and equipment of a cost of not more than $500.00 per item**				**$10,000.00**
Total for Option Period					

RESPONSES TO VENDOR QUESTIONS FROM THE PRE PROPOSAL CONFERENCE FOR SOLICITATION NO. DCJZ-2007-R-0002, EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR COMMITTED MALE YOUTH AT THE OAK HILL YOUTH CENTER

1. ***Is a recent analysis of student demographic and academic and social-emotional status available? For example, a breakdown of youth by age, number of students and type of learning or emotional diagnoses, racial or ethnicity?***

The average age of youth at the Oak Hill Youth Center is 16. On September 14, 2006, 53 of the 101 youth there that day (or 52%) had been identified as receiving special education services. Of the students identified as having special education needs, about 2/3 were identified has having a learning disability or an emotional or behavioral disorder. Other students in special education were receiving speech and language services. A few students were identified as having a cognitive impairment or other health impairment.

Additionally, the District of Columbia State Education Office's October 2006 Membership Report shows a total of 80 students, 38 of which are special needs. The breakdown shows the following:

- Six 7th grade students;
- Seven 8th grade students;
- Eighteen 9th grade students;
- Five 10th grade students;
- Two 11th grade students, and
- Zero 12th grade students

2. ***Is there up to date information showing length of stay data for youth at Oak Hill since the detained youth have been relocated?***

Though DYRS does not have specific data on the length of stay for youth at the Oak Hill Youth Center since the removal of detained youth, over time the length of stay for the great majority of youth at Oak Hill will be between 6-12 months, with an average of approximately 9 months.

3. ***When a student enters Oak Hill, how accurately can staff predict, based on the commitment terms, the length of time the student will remain at Oak Hill?***

As stated above, DYRS expects that the average length of time at Oak Hill will be between 6-12 months, depending on how the youth progresses in the program.

4. ***Is there data providing information on recent admissions and release trends at Oak Hill that is available? For example it could be helpful to see trends on how often and in what numbers new youth are entering the facility, and similarly, to see trends on exit. This data might help us plan for intake and assessment, as well as staffing the Re-integration Center.***

The most recent data, for 2005, is as follows:

- 413 committed youth admissions to Oak Hill Youth Center
- 433 committed youth releases from Oak Hill Youth Center
- Mean Length of Stay for committed youth releases = 79
- Median Length of Stay for committed youth releases = 57

5. ***Grouping and working with students:***

- ***How students are currently grouped during the school day? What sort of restrictions are there and will there be on grouping youth while at Oak Hill?***

  For the most part, youth are currently grouped based on academic ability. In the future, we envision a hybrid where youth will be grouped based on their interest in one of the career academies and otherwise kept in a group with other youth on their assigned living unit. Some youth will also be assigned to classes or services based on their special education needs.

- ***How many students will be in each living unit once renovations are completed at the facility? And per above, what sort of restrictions will there be in year two and beyond once the facility renovations have been competed?***

  Prior to the new facility being opened, there will be 10-13 youth on each of the "DC Model" units. There will be as many as 20 youth on a unit for youth awaiting a placement other than Oak Hill. Once the new facility opens, youth will be in groups of 10 youth.

6. ***Career and Vocational Training*****:**

- ***The RFP mentions, as examples, both culinary arts and construction trades as possible career institutes. Does the facility currently have labs or workshops that are equipped for training youth in these areas? If so, is a complete listing of equipment and inventory available to bidders? To the extent that developing comprehensive career institutes may require capital investment in the first year, will DYRS support programming that calls for this?***

  The facility currently has a woodworking and auto shop. The DCPS inventory of all DCPS existing equipment and furnishings at the Oak Hill School is included in the RFP as Applicable Document #26.

DYRS does not envision making capital investments to modify the current physical plant to support additional vocational capacity.

- ***If the contractor chose to implement a culinary arts program, would the culinary arts program be able or required to produce food for the school?***

  The Contractor will not be required to produce food for the DYRS School. However, as part of an offeror's culinary arts program the offeror may wish to propose ways in which youth can participate in DYRS' existing culinary service as part of the Contractor's culinary arts program.

- ***In both the construction and culinary arts fields, students need access to potentially dangerous equipment and materials such as knives, hammers, and saws, etc. What is the current policy on this sort of classroom materials? And is there flexibility on how or when a school could introduce certain articles to students?***

  In order to ensure safety and meet security needs in the facility as it relates to the Contractor's vocational programming, the Contractor will be expected to consider a youth's IEP and rehabilitative progress before a determination is made to place a student in a specific vocational program where the above-mentioned equipment may be used. Also, the Contractor is expected to collaborate with the DYRS Program Manager for Education and Workforce Development before placing a student in a vocational program where such equipment may be used.

7. Staffing and related:

- **What is the current staffing structure like at the school? Can we get a copy of the current staffing plan?**

  The existing school currently has a principal, assistant principal, business manager, two special education coordinators, one transition coordinator, one art teacher, three English teachers, one physical education teacher, three math teachers, one music teacher, one permanent substitute teacher, one science teacher, three social studies teachers, one world language teacher, six special education teachers, two counselors, one guidance clerk, one library/media specialist, one computer specialist, one data clerk, one registrar, one orientation assessor, one orientation specialist, four transition specialists, one school psychologist, one clinical psychologist, one social worker, three special education aides, one speech therapist, one crisis manager, and an executive director.

- ***What role, if any, will DYRS play in assisting the contractor in discussions with current employees generally, and in compliance with the employee displacement requirements? (Refer to Section H.20)***

Though DCPS and DYRS do not anticipate any displaced employees, to the extent there is, DYRS will assist in facilitating communications with DCPS regarding current employees.

- ***The RFP provides teacher-teacher assistant to student ratios, but does not mandate staffing levels for mental health staff (social workers, for example). Nor does the RFP provide guidance on the number or ratios of other positions like Student Support Manager or Behavioral Specialists. Does DYRS have any guidance for contractors in these areas****?*

  In addition to six special education teachers serving the approximately 100 youth who were at Oak Hill in September, 2006, a special education coordinator, two school psychologists, one-speech language specialist (who also served youth at the Youth Services Center), one social worker, and an administrative assistant provided special education services and supports. The school had a "crisis teacher" position but it was eliminated at the start of the current school year.

  The school psychologists and the school social worker provided direct service to youth as well as assessed youth and participated in IEP meetings.

- ***Does the teacher-teacher assistant ratio to students of 2:10 apply at the Transition School, as well****?*

  Yes

- ***Is there any further guidance that you can give us about the number, role, and flexibility that DYRS staff—particularly individuals such as case managers and social workers—will have to work with school staff?***

  DYRS will be staffing the living units with a team that will consist of a Unit Manager, approx 13 Youth Development Specialists, social services staff and behavioral/mental health staff. We expect that school staff will work as part of the team in collaboration with DYRS staff.

8. ***School hours and related:***

- ***The RFP says that students will stay at the Community Re-integration Center for up to 90 days. Does the contractor have the authority to establish guidelines and policies for length of stay and for transition to other school or program from the Center?***

  Yes. Please refer to Sections C.3.32.1 and C.3.32.7 of the RFP.

- ***Similarly, does the contractor have flexibility in designing the school hours and student schedules for the Center?***

  The DYRS school hours and student schedules shall meet the requirements of the RFP. Please refer to the following sections of the RFP: C.1, C.3.7, C.3.29.2, C.3.30.1, C.3.31.1, C.3.31.2 and C.3.32.

9. ***Health Related*:**

- ***Does DYRS provide staff to assess basic health, hearing, sound for students when they arrive at Oak Hill. And for students who may need glasses, for example, are they provided by DYRS or is that the responsibility of the school?***

  DYRS will be responsible for meeting the physical health needs including provision of eye glasses for the youth at DYRS.

- ***Similarly, is a nurse available at all times for students, and on contract at DYRS?***

  Medical care is available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week for all youth at the Oak Hill Youth Center. For the community based reintegration program please refer to Amendment #, MOOO2, Item # 7.

10. ***Food and other incidentals:***

- ***The RFP doesn' t suggest that the school contractor needs to be responsible for food for the school. Is this correct****?*

  DYRS will provide all food services for the Youth at the DYRS School located on the Oak Hill Youth Center Campus. However, the Contractor shall be responsible for providing meals to youth participating in the Community-based Re-integration Program. Please refer to Amendment # M0002, Item # 8.

11. ***We understand that the contractor must provide space, educational services, and programming for the 90-day re-integration program.***

- ***Is DYRS anticipating that the contractor will provide residential services for the 30 students during the 90-day period following their release from Oak Hill?***

  DYRS is not anticipating that the Contractor will provide residential services for the youth participating in the Community-Based Re-integration Program.

- ***If not, where will the students be living during these three months?***

  The youth will be living in the community, either with family or in group homes or other alternative housing.

- ***Will they be coming from various halfway houses? from their homes?***

  See above answer.

12. ***Should the contractor include transportation to and from the re-integration program?***

Students should be able to use public transportation to and from the Community-Based Reintegration Program. However, some students in the Community-Based Reintegration Program may be working at job sites or participating in other pre-or post-secondary training and/or internships in the community and may not be at the Community-Based Reintegration Program site each day or all day. In such cases, the Contractor shall assist the youth with transportation, as needed. Please see Amendment # M0002, Item 6.

13. ***Please describe the physical location for the program and residences.***

The new facility will be located at the Oak Hill Youth Center in Laurel Maryland and will consist of a main building, which will include the school, a theater, dining hall, and offices. There will be three buildings with two 10 bed units in each building (for a total of 60 beds). For the existing facility, refer to the response to question #16

14. ***What safeguards will be in place to ensure that the Oak Hill population does not increase beyond the 60 residents in future years?***

DYRS is in the process of implementing a full community-based continuum of care for youth placed in the care and custody of DYRS. The community-based continuum of care is designed to reduce the number of youth committed to the Oak Hill Youth Center to a maximum of 60 at any given time.

15. ***What school records and how will student records be made available to the new provider?***

It is expected that when a youth is sent to DYRS, the new contractor will work with the DCPS to obtain school records. Please refer to Section C.3.29 of the RFP.

16. ***What classroom space and/or other space will be made available to the provider school (such as vocational training space, recreation space and others)?***

The provider will have access to the entire school building, including instructional classroom and vocational space and the indoor and outdoor recreation area on the Oak Hill Youth Center campus. The existing school facility consists of the following: main school (eight classrooms, four restrooms, four offices); activity

building (library, art room. two classrooms); vocational building (storage cage, one classroom); music trailer; residential units 9A & 9B (one classroom); residential unit 7 (assessment area, one classroom); residential unit 10A (one office); residential modular building (two classrooms, computer area, two restrooms, special education area); and, gymnasium (one office, storage, and main area).

17. ***Will students be held out of school or not allowed to participate if they have been involved in behavioral issues****?*

The expectation is that students will always be provided with a means to be educated, even those that experience behavioral issues. Therefore, we are looking to the new contractor to work with DYRS when there is a situation involving behavioral issues, so that we can address it immediately. Even it means that a child will be held out of school or not allowed to participate in an activity, it is expected that they will continue to engage in their studies. Also, please refer to Section C.3.36 of the RFP.

18. ***What are the exclusion criteria for youth being referred to Oak Hill (i.e., mental health issues, intellectual functioning level)?***

There are no specific exclusion criteria; however, Oak Hill is not designed to be a mental health facility or facility for significantly disabled youth.

19. ***What access will the provider' s teaching staff have to D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) professional development services?***

Any professional development service that the State Education Agency offers will be made available to the provider at the Oak Hill Youth Center. Also, please refer to the Memorandum of Understanding between DYRS and DCPS, Applicable Document #4 and Section C.3.39.18 of the RFP.

20. ***Will DCPS remain the LEA and/or SEA for this program for responsibilities under (IDEIA) special education and other state/federal requirements****?*

DCPS will not remain the Local Education Agency. DCPS will be the SEA for the Program and Chapter 30 of the Board of Education Rules outlines the requirements.

21. *Consistent with the question above, who would incur costs of disability assessments, etc. under IDEIA and if it is the contractor, presumably it would be reflected in the total cost?*

The vendor is responsible for the identification and evaluation of students with disabilities. In addition, the vendor is responsible for the delivery of services that includes the implementation of all services outlined in the IEP.

22. *What educational model is currently in place or has been used in the past?*

The educational model is centered around the standards and curriculum outlined by DCPS as the State Education Agency for the delivery of educational services to children grades K through 12.

23. ***If no acceptable vendors/proposals are presented, is there a back-up process and timetable for re-bidding the project? How might implementation timetables be affected?***

An award cannot be made if the District does not receive any acceptable proposals in response to this RFP, if that happens the District will determine how to proceed at that time.

24. ***Would an open entry/open exit academic program proposal be viewed as outside the parameters of the RFP? I am assuming a research basis for the proposed approach.***

Offerors are requested to respond to the specific requirements delineated in the RFP. In accordance with Section 1618.1 of the District of Columbia Procurement Regulations, the District shall evaluate each proposal received in accordance with the evaluation criteria in Section M of the solicitation.

25. ***Would your office consider facilitating a subcontractor meeting with bidders?***

The District cannot involve itself in a prospective offeror's negotiation with potential sub-contractors. The District's Department of Small and Local Business Development can provide a list of businesses which may be eligible and interested in providing sub-contracting services. The Department of Small and Local Business' e-mail address is www.OLBD.DC.gov.

26. ***Where is the Reintegration Center? Would the new Contractor use that facility?***

DYRS does not have a facility for the community-based re-integration program required by the RFP. Section C.3.32.2 of the RFP requires the Contractor to provide space for the community-based re-integration program. Section L.2.1.1.2.4 of the RFP requests each offeror to provide specific information in its proposal regarding the space the offeror expects to use for the community-based re-integration program.

27. ***How large is special education staff now?***

The special education staff consists of six (6) qualified education teachers, two (2) special education coordinators, one (1) speech therapist, three (3) special education aides, two (2) compliance specialists, two (2) psychologists, one (1) social worker, and four (4) transition specialists.

28. What are three strengths and three weaknesses of the current education program at the Oak Hill Youth Center?

Three strengths are as follows:

- Some very good, energetic and concerned staff;
- A good staff/student ratio, and
- Interagency cooperation has improved of late

Three Weaknesses are as follows:

- Interagency collaboration has been a challenge;
- Some staff who are not up to par, and
- The educational model is not specifically geared toward a group of high need, delinquent youth who are often many years behind in grade level.

29. ***Can you provide information on the Missouri Model?***

Please see Exhibit I, Article regarding the Missouri Model.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL: THE MISSOURI DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

Since closing its large juvenile training schools 20 years ago, Missouri has become a model for the nation in juvenile corrections.

BY DICK MENDEL Just a hundred yards south of the Missouri River, a few blocks off the main drag in Boonville, Missouri, population 8,000, lies an arresting site: a 158-acre campus of grim two-story brick residence halls, surrounded by a chain-link fence adorned with razor wire at eye-level and topped with a menacing barbed-wire overhang.

Think of it as a portrait of America's approach to juvenile corrections.

In state after state, the greatest budget expenditures for juvenile corrections and the greatest number of incarcerated youth are concentrated in large, congregate-care "training schools," most of them located in country towns like Boonville. Nationwide, 52 percent of juveniles confined in 1997 were held in facilities with more than 110 offenders.

In these training schools, young offenders—most of them minorities, often from the cities—spend months or years, typically housed in small cells, disconnected from their families and neighborhoods. They are disconnected as well from the social forces that drove them to criminality—and to which they will sooner or later return.

The facilities employ teachers and typically some certified counselors as well, but youth spend much of their time under the watchful gaze of "correctional officers," often high school graduates, some with little training in or affinity for counseling or youth development. Or, if youth misbehave, they languish alone—locked down in isolation cells.

Training school confinement is often justified as a necessary step to protect the public. Yet only 27 percent of incarcerated youth nationwide have been found guilty of a violent felony. Most have committed only property or drug crimes, or disorderly conduct, sometimes only misdemeanors or "status offenses" (like truancy or alcohol possession) that would not be crimes if committed by an adult. Nonetheless, recidivism studies routinely find that half or more of training school youth are convicted of a new offense within three years of release.

Residents of the Northwest Regional Youth Center outside Kansas City play guitar and chat with state Division of Youth Services director Mark Steward and regional administrator Gail Mumford.

The Rear-View Mirror

Here in Missouri, though, this troubling portrait of juvenile corrections can be seen only in the rear-view mirror.

From 1887 until 1983, the Boonville Training School was Missouri's primary correctional facility for boys, holding up to 650 teens at a time. Though its stated mission was rehabilitative, the reality at Boonville was often brutal.

Soon after losing his job in 1949, for instance, former Boonville Superintendent John Tindall, a would-be reformer, described the facility in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: "I saw black eyes, battered faces, broken noses among the boys," Tindall wrote. "The usual corrective procedure among the guards was to knock a boy down with their fists, then kick him in the groin … Many of the men were sadists."

Three boys died inside the facility in 1948 alone.

Conditions remained problematic throughout the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, reports University of Missouri law professor Douglas Abrams, who recently completed a history of the state's juvenile courts. A 1969 federal report condemned Boonville's "quasi-penal-military" atmosphere, particularly the practice of banishing unruly youth to "the Hole"—a dark, solitary confinement room atop the facility's administration building.

Then in 1983, Missouri shut down the Boonville training school.

Missouri's Division of Youth Services (DYS) began in the 1970s to experiment with smaller correctional programs. Liking the

results, and tired of the endless scandals at Boonville, the state donated the facility to the state's Department of Corrections, which turned it into an adult penitentiary.

In place of Boonville, as well as a training school for girls in Chillicothe that closed in 1981, DYS secured smaller sites across the state—abandoned school buildings, large residential homes, a convent—and outfitted them to house delinquent teens. The largest of the new units housed only three dozen teens.

DYS divided the state into five regions, so confined youth could remain within driving distance of their homes and families. And it began staffing its facilities primarily with college-educated "youth specialists," rather than traditional corrections officers.

Over the next decade, DYS developed a distinctive new approach to juvenile corrections—one that relies on group process and personal development, rather than punishment and isolation, as the best medicines for delinquent teens.

Today, the available data suggest that Missouri achieves far more success than most other states in reducing the future criminality of youthful offenders. Missouri also rises above the pack in protecting the safety of confined youth, preventing abuses, and fostering learning.

"I think it's a great system," says Barry Krisberg, president of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. "More than any other state in the country, Missouri provides a positive, treatment-oriented approach that's not punitive or prison-like."

Small Is Beautiful

According to both Missouri insiders and national justice experts, Missouri's switch to smaller facilities was crucial to improving its juvenile corrections system. "The most important thing in dealing with youthful offenders is the relationships," says veteran juvenile justice consultant Paul DeMuro, "the one-on-one relationships formed between young people and staff. And not just the line staff. It's critical that the director of the facility know every kid by name."

Ned Loughran, executive director of the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators, agrees that "small is extremely important."

"The kids coming into juvenile facilities need a lot of specialized attention," Loughran says. "A small facility allows the staff to get to know the kids on a very individual basis."

Large facilities routinely suffer with high rates of staff turnover and absenteeism, Loughran adds, "so the kids spend a lot of time sitting in their rooms . . . With large [facilities] it's like going to a large urban high school. Kids get lost, and these kids can't afford to get lost."

Small Isn't Everything

Smaller facilities, however, are not a magic bullet for juvenile corrections reform. Kentucky has long housed delinquent teens in small facilities, but a federal investigation in 1995 found that Kentucky was ignoring abuse complaints, using isolation cells excessively, and providing substandard education and mental health programming. (Since then, Kentucky has beefed up staff training and closed its worst facilities.)

In Missouri, small facilities likewise produced no immediate miracles. Initially, chaos reigned inside many of the new sites, recalls Gail Mumford, who began working with DYS in 1983 and now serves as the division's regional administrator for the northwest corner of the state.

"It was really crazy," says Mumford. "We didn't know what we were doing. The boys ran us ragged [at first]. They were acting up every day, sometimes every hour."

But conditions in Missouri's small facilities steadily improved as DYS tinkered with staffing patterns, invested in staff training, built case management and family counseling capabilities, and invested in community-based services to monitor and support teens after they leave custody.

Led by its charismatic director, Mark Steward, who has overseen the agency since 1988, DYS also built an enviable base of political support across the

Missouri political spectrum. Before his untimely death in 2000, Democratic Governor Mel Carnahan frequently invited Steward to bring DYS youth for visits to his office in the state capitol. Likewise, conservative state Supreme Court Judge Stephen Limbaugh, a cousin of commentator Rush Limbaugh, is also a longtime DYS supporter.

Remodeling the Schoolhouse

In what was once an elementary school on the northern fringes of Kansas City, 15 miles from downtown, the Northwest Regional Youth Center is home to 30 serious youth offenders.

Inside, the facility has been redesigned from its schoolhouse days. But there are no cells inside, no iron bars. In fact, once you pass through a metal detector at the front door, there are few locked doors and little security hardware of any type—just video cameras whose monitors line a wall of the central office.

"Why I think they're such a good system is that they have preserved the community aspect even in the secure programs," says Loughran. "When you visit, you can see that they're not institutional. They've been able to preserve … a family atmosphere."

The main lobby of the Northwest Center is furnished with couches and rugs. Handmade posters produced by facility residents hang on one wall, and an upright piano hugs another. Along the third wall stands an elaborate fountain, constructed by residents in the late '90s, that empties into an oval pond that brims with oversized goldfish.

Three of the old school's classrooms remain just that, classrooms, and three others have been turned into dormitories—each an open room furnished with two-level bunk beds and dressers.

These dorms, in turn, are each part of a larger "pod" where residents spend the majority of their time. Each pod also includes a living room furnished with couches and coffee tables, plus a "treatment room" where the team meets for an hour each afternoon and youth talk about their personal histories, their future goals, and the roots of their delinquent behavior.

A Focus on Treatment

It is this emphasis on treatment, and the underlying philosophy behind it, that sets Missouri apart.

Like a growing number of states, Missouri employs mental health counselors to work with youth and

DYS SUCCESS: Now a 26-year-old husband and father earning $70,000 per year managing this furniture showroom, Jason Janicke has come a long way. Jason started running the streets at age 12 "just to get away from being home," he says. His mother was schizophrenic, and his father figure was alcoholic. After arrests for stealing bicycles and cars, Jason spent three years in and out of DYS custody, first in a group home and then at two locked facilities. DYS staff pushed Jason to explore his biracial background and his troubled family roots. "Until I did the genogram [see p. 32]," he says, "I had never thought about that."

their families, and it partners with outside psychiatrists to ensure that confined youth receive appropriate psychotropic medications.

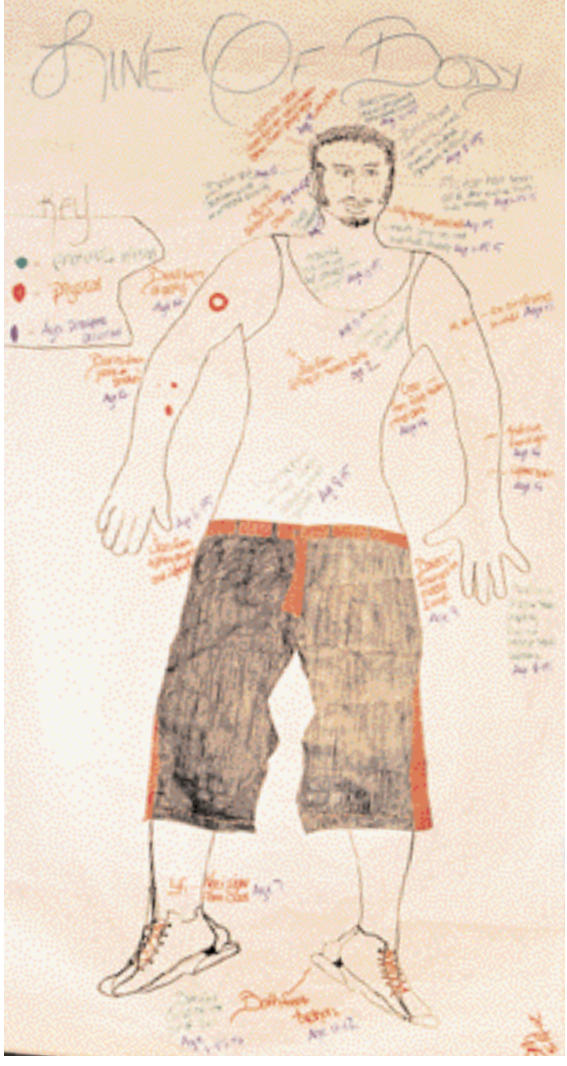
But while some states concentrate therapy in these occasional services, Missouri infuses treatment into every aspect of its correctional programs. From the day they enter a DYS facility, Missouri youth spend virtually every moment with a team of 9–11 other teens. The teams eat together, sleep together, study together, shower together—always under the supervision of two trained youth specialists (or during the school day, one youth specialist and one teacher).

At least five times per day the teams "check in" with one another—telling their peers and the staff how they feel physically and emotionally. And at any time, youth are free to call a "circle"—in which all team members must stand facing one another—to raise concerns or voice complaints. Thus, at any moment the focus can shift from the activity at hand—education, exercise, clean-up, a bathroom break—to a lengthy discussion of behaviors and attitudes. Staff members also call circles frequently to enforce expectations regarding safety, courtesy, and respect.

At the Northwest Center, efforts to establish a positive environment are clearly paying off. "I remember my first day," recalled Dawson, a Northwest resident, before leaving the facility last year. "People were helping each other, people were interacting with each other in ways you weren't used to. You ain't used to a total stranger helping you out to a degree that any average person wouldn't."

Line of Body

The final pillar of Missouri's rehabilitative process takes place in the treatment rooms, where teams meet each afternoon. Some days the teens participate in "group-builders"—shared activities designed to build comradery and help teens explore issues like trust, perceptions, and communication. But in many meetings one particular teen will make a presentation to the group about his or her life.



In this "line of body" drawing, a 15-year-old DYS resident has traced all of the physical and emotional scars of his young life. The line of body is one of several exercises youth undertake as part of the DYS treatment process.

In the "life history" session, teens are asked to—and often do—talk about wrenching experiences in their lives: domestic abuse, violence, sexual victimization, and family negligence. They are also encouraged to speak about their crimes and other misdeeds.

In the "genogram," teens produce and then explain a coded family tree detailing domestic violence, alcoholism, drug addiction, criminality, and illiteracy in their families, as a first step toward exploring the roots of their own behavior problems. In the "line of body," confined adolescents trace their bodies onto a large sheet of paper and then write in the physical and mental traumas they have suffered during their young lives.

When Martin, a 15-year-old chronic offender in the Northwest Regional Youth Center's "A Team," completed the exercise last year, his illustration was covered with scars. Martin's feet had been broken at ages 11 and 12, and "both feet carried me in and out of evil," he wrote. Both hands were scarred from fighting, Martin said, and stained through contact

with drugs, stolen property, and "negative sexual relations." One arm had burns suffered while smoking marijuana, the other arm a knife wound.

But it was around his head that Martin had suffered the deepest trauma: sleep problems (ages 11–15); emotional scars from physical and sexual abuse (ages 2–15), including sexual assaults by his own father at age 7; brain injuries from a nearly successful suicide attempt (age 11); and "brain fried" from his abuse of "pills, weed, meth, alcohol, shrooms, and opium" (ages 8–15).

Sadly, this long list of wounds is not atypical of the boys and girls committed to DYS. Of the 12 teens in the Northwest Center's A Team in the first half of 2002, nine suffered from parental abuse or neglect; 12 had alcoholic or drug-addicted parents; and six had parents who had served time behind bars, including two boys whose fathers were in prison for murder.

A Safe Space

According to Vicky Weimholt, the DYS deputy director in charge of treatment, convincing delinquent teens to open up about their troubled pasts is critical in reversing behavior problems. And the keys to getting teens talking are physical and emotional safety. "Without safety," she says, "you're really very limited in what you can do.

"Our staff are always there, and they will not let you get hurt," Weimholt explains. "And on the emotional side, you can't underestimate the power of group work. There are nine or ten other kids in the same circumstances, facing the same problems … There's safety in knowing that I'm not the only one going through this."

In promoting safety, DYS staff shun most of the tactics commonly used in training schools. Even when they act out, youth are almost never held in isolation. The Northwest Regional Youth Center has no isolation cells. DYS staff do not employ "hog ties," "four-point restraints," or handcuffs to stifle youth who become violent.

Instead, Missouri staff train the teams themselves to restrain any youth who threatens the group's safety. Only staff members may authorize a restraint, but once they do team members grab arms and legs and wrestle their peer to the ground. Once down, the team holds on until the young person regains his or her composure.

Ned Loughran, the correctional administrators' director, sharply criticizes this practice, which has been abandoned by nearly every other state. "You shouldn't have juvenile offenders putting their hands on other juvenile offenders," he says. "These kids come in with all kinds of aggression."

But DYS Director Mark Steward defends youth restraints on both practical and therapeutic grounds. "We don't have 200-kid facilities with 100 staff we can call in to break things up," he says. And even if they did have the staffing, "if we had to wait for the staff to arrive [whenever a fight broke out], someone's gonna get their head beat in."

Steward says that in the 15 years he's been leading DYS, there has never been a serious injury during a restraint, never a lawsuit or a formal complaint filed by parents. Steward also cites the infrequent use of restraints in DYS facilities and the near-absence of serious fights among youth.

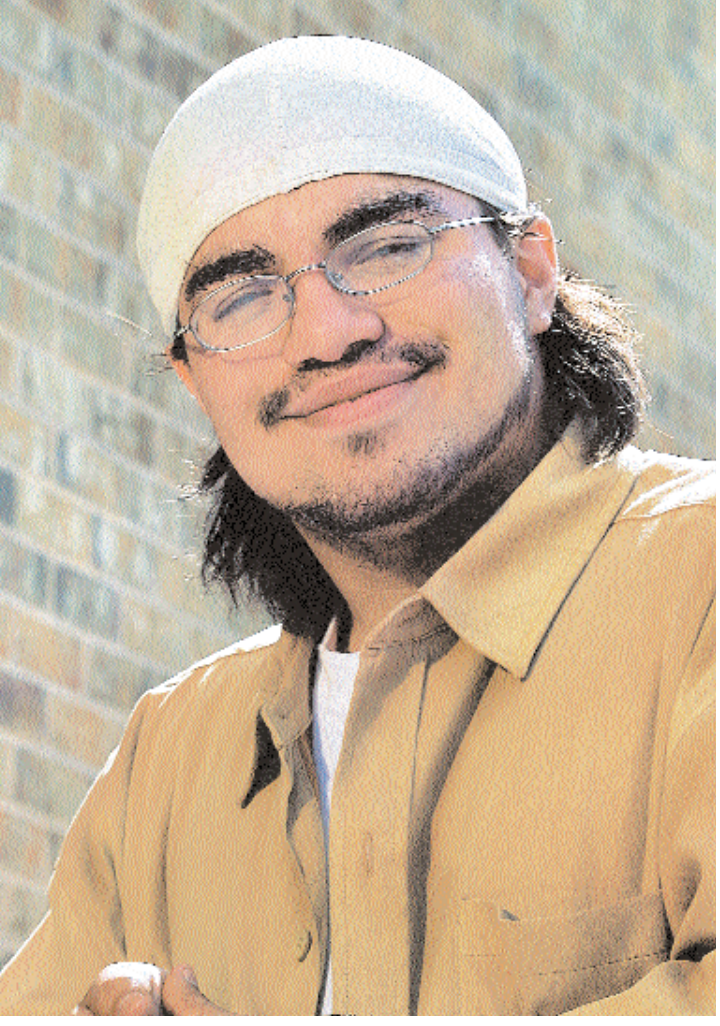
On the Northwest Center's A Team, for instance, not a single fight broke out from February to November 2002, and only six restraints were called—all for the same young man, Isaiah, an emotionally disturbed 17-year-old on heavy medications.

"The kids are the only ones who can stop the fights and keep it safe," Steward says. "So it works much better to give them the responsibility."

Community Connection

The small scale and therapeutic, family-oriented atmosphere distinguish Missouri's juvenile facilities from the training schools common throughout most of America. The differences do not end when Missouri teens walk out the doors of a DYS facility. More than most states, Missouri supports youth through the tricky transition when they leave facilities and return home.

"Large, locked, secure training schools frequently fall prey to an institutional culture in which the measures of success relate only to compliance with rules and norms," writes Johns Hopkins University criminologist David Altschuler, the nation's foremost expert on so-called "aftercare" for juvenile offenders.



DYS SUCCESS: Dustin Hernandez spent his first 13 years bouncing from one foster home to the next. Then he joined a gang, became a drug runner, and ran afoul of the law. Sentenced to the Northwest Regional Youth Center in 1999, Dustin raised hell when he first arrived. But gradually the message sunk in: "I realized, hey, I can use this time to my advantage," he says. "I spent a good six months being quiet, real thoughtful, and then I started speaking up and getting a lot of support from the staff." A natural leader, Dustin has thrived since departing DYS custody in November 2000. He currently attends college, works the overnight shift for UPS, and serves on the Governor of Missouri's Youth Service Council.

"Progress within such settings is generally short-lived, unless it is followed up, reinforced, and monitored in the community," Altschuler complains, and in most jurisdictions, "the complexity and fragmentation of the justice system works against the reintegration of offenders back into the community."

Missouri, by contrast, makes aftercare a core component of its correctional approach. It assigns one "service coordinator" to oversee each young person from the time they enter DYS custody until he or she is discharged—usually after three to six months on aftercare. These coordinators—unlike the parole officers employed by most states—decide when the young person will leave residential care, and they already have longstanding relationships with teens when they do head home.

While on aftercare, youth meet and speak frequently with their service coordinators, and many youth are also assigned a "tracker"—typically a college student, or a resident of the youth's home community—who meets with them several times per week, monitors their progress, and helps them find jobs.

Missouri also operates 11 nonresidential "day treatment" centers from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. each school day, which serve as a step-down for many teens after leaving a DYS facility. (DYS also assigns some youth—typically younger teens with lesser-offending histories—directly to day treatment.)

Well-Spoken Teens

Word of Missouri's unique juvenile corrections system has begun to spread. National Public Radio aired a feature about DYS in 2001, and the nonpartisan American Youth Policy Forum dubbed Missouri a "guiding light" for juvenile justice reform. As a result, the state hosts frequent tours for policymakers and juvenile justice practitioners from other states.

Visitors often respond with surprise, even amazement, at the feeling of safety and optimism inside the facilities, and at the ability of Missouri youth to articulate a positive message and dispel the negative stereotypes that typically surround delinquent teens.

After touring St. Louis-area DYS facilities in December 2002, David Addison, chief juvenile public defender for Baltimore County, Maryland, said, "I was very impressed with the professionalism of the staff, and I was impressed that the kids really understood what the program was all about. They were able to express it a lot better than a lot of the staff could explain it here in Maryland."

More than most states, Missouri supports youth through the tricky transition when they leave facilities and return home.

Diane Winston, a Louisiana state legislator who toured DYS facilities in late 2002, says that "the kids we met had definitely gone through a process of change. They had a lot of new tools for coping when they get out. …

"In Louisiana, we have what Missouri had 20 years ago, which is warehousing kids in facilities that isolate and punish our juvenile offenders," Winston added. "In Missouri, they've broken it down into smaller therapeutically focused centers where they really are changing behaviors." (For more on this tour, see "For Louisiana Leaders, An Eye-Opening Experience" on p. 37.)

DYS Director Mark Steward takes DYS youth every year to visit with and testify before state legislators in Jefferson City, Missouri's capital, and Steward sponsors countless facility tours for influential leaders all over the state.

Linda Luebbering, who once analyzed the DYS budget for the Missouri Division of Budget and Planning and is now the budget division's director, vividly recalls her first visit to a DYS facility.

"I was surprised that I was walking into a facility like that—these were hard-core kids—and I was completely comfortable to go up and talk to them about their treatment," Luebbering says. "I ended up in a long conversation with a very well-spoken young man. Only afterward did Mark [Steward] tell me that this kid had committed murder. It made a big impression on me."

Measuring Outcomes

Historically, DYS has not measured the long-term reoffending rates of program graduates. For years it reported only the number of youth returned to its own custody for crimes and rule violations committed before their 17th birthdays—but not how many were convicted or sentenced as adults.

In April 2000, Missouri's state auditor criticized this oversight, and since then DYS has tracked the number of youth who end up in Missouri's adult corrections system. (DYS still lacks the ability to calculate the number of youth convicted of new offenses following release, the most common measure of recidivism.)

The most recent DYS recidivism report, compiled in February 2003, shows that 70 percent of youth released in 1999 avoided recommitment to a correctional program within three years.

Of 1,386 teens released from DYS custody in 1999, just 111 (8 percent) were sentenced to state prison or a state-run 120-day adult incarceration program within 36 months of release, and 266 (19 percent) were sentenced to adult probation. The new report also shows that 94 youth were recommitted to DYS for new offenses following release. (Another 134 youth returned to DYS residential facilities temporarily for breaking rules while on aftercare. DYS does not consider these cases failures or include them in its recidivism data.)

Compared to states that measure recidivism in similar ways, these success rates are exceptional. For instance, a 2000 recidivism study in Maryland found that 30 percent of youth released from juvenile corrections facilities in 1997 were incarcerated as adults within three years. In Louisiana, 45 percent of youth released from residential programs in 1999 returned to juvenile custody or were sentenced to adult prison or probation by mid-2002.

In Florida, 29 percent of youth released from a juvenile commitment program in 2000–2001 were returned to juvenile custody or sentenced to adult prison or probation within 12 months; the comparable figure in Missouri is just 9 percent.

Missouri's lower recidivism rates do not come with a high price tag. The total DYS budget for 2002 was $58.4 million—equal to $103 for each young person statewide between the ages of 10 and 16. By contrast, Louisiana spends $270 per young person 10–16, Maryland spends roughly $192 for each youth ages 10–17, and Florida spends approximately $271.

(Juvenile courts in Maryland and Florida have jurisdiction over youth up to age 17, while Missouri and Louisiana juvenile laws cover youth only up to age 16.)

In addition, not a single Missouri teen has committed suicide under DYS custody in the 20 years since Boonville closed. Lindsay Hayes, a researcher with the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, reports that 110 youth suicides occurred nationwide in juvenile facilities from 1995 to 1999 alone.

Missouri's educational outcomes are also promising. Though DYS youth enter custody at the 26th percentile of Missouri students in reading and the 21st percentile in math, and many have not attended school regularly for years, three-fourths made more academic progress than a typical public school student in 2002, and 222 DYS youth earned their GEDs.

Unfinished Business

Even with these encouraging signs, some limitations remain apparent in Missouri's youth corrections efforts.

While the DYS philosophy places strong emphasis on families, and the regional approach keeps most teens close to home, only 40 percent of DYS youth participated in family therapy last year. And in many cases, this therapy involved only handful of sessions just prior to release. Moreover, DYS therapists need not be licensed. Most are former direct care staff who have undertaken 150 hours of additional in-house training.

DYS has also suffered in recent years from a lingering state budget crisis. Salaries have been frozen since 2000, which has sapped morale and led some valued staffers to leave. The budget squeeze has also reduced DYS's ability to help youth from deeply troubled families. Funding for "independent living" programs is increasingly scarce, forcing DYS to return some youth to chaotic and unhealthy homes. Budget shortages have also limited DYS's ability to help youth prepare for work and careers.

Providing Opportunity

Despite these limitations, 70 percent of Missouri youth stay out of serious trouble for three years after leaving DYS facilities. Even at the Northwest Regional Youth Center, which receives the most serious offenders in the Kansas City region—including many youth who've failed in other programs—half of the graduates succeed for three years.

Among youth released from the Northwest Center's A Team in 2002, none had returned to state custody as of March 2003. Martin, whose "line of body" revealed head-to-toe scars, is back in high school earning good grades. Isaiah, the heavily medicated youth, has lived at home for five months without incident. Jerome, an athletic Kansas City teen with a long history of car thefts, is mentoring younger children in an after-school project. Roger, a one-time gang member and drug dealer, joined the military. Craig, a former heroin user and dealer, found work in a hospital.

Only one teen, Dawson, appears to be in serious jeopardy. A muscular African-American teen from one of Kansas City's toughest east-side neighborhoods, Dawson was born to an addicted mother and a father he never knew. He was taken in by a neighborhood family at age 4 but never bonded with his stepfather, and his behavior grew increasingly reckless in adolescence. By 16, when he entered the Northwest Center, Dawson had been arrested for burglary, assault, drug possession, and driving in a stolen car.

Missouri's lower recidivism rates do not come at a high price. The DYS budget for 2002 was $58.4 million—$103 for each young person of juvenile age statewide. By contrast, Louisiana spends $270 per young person statewide, Maryland spends roughly $192 per young person, and Florida spends approximately $271.

FOR LOUISIANA LEADERS, AN EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE

After driving through the entry gates of the Watkins Mill State Park one gray November afternoon, two dozen well-dressed powerbrokers traverse a gravel parking lot and approach a nondescript wood frame building. The front door is unlocked.

Inside, the walls are decorated with crepe paper, and the air is infused with the welcoming aroma of hot cider. A half dozen teens—African Americans and whites, boys and girls—greet the visitors warmly.

Though they have been sentenced here for serious (but mostly non-violent) crimes, the youth are dressed in their own clothes—no jump suits, no military crew cuts. The teens laugh and joke with their staff, they look visitors in the eye, they smile easily as they offer up cider and a snack.

Most of the visitors have come from Louisiana, members of a commission established by the state legislature to explore reforms of the Bayou State's deeply troubled juvenile corrections system.

The group is understandably tired. This is stop number three today in a whirlwind tour of juvenile facilities in and around Kansas City. But something about this site sparks their attention: There are no fences here, and no heavy locked doors. The path to escape is wide open.

"Why don't you run?" asks one member of the delegation, a county judge.

"Until now, this issue of juvenile justice has just been words and numbers to me. But this tour has really put a human face on the issue for me. It's a face of hope."

For the Louisianans, the idea that delinquent youth might remain in a correctional facility voluntarily seems incongruous. Their juvenile corrections agency—managed by the state bureau of prisons—is dominated by four massive youth correctional centers, each housing more than 180 youth offenders. Grim, sometimes barbaric conditions inside these facilities prompted a federal investigation in 1996.

In 1998 a front-page *New York Times* feature on one of the facilities declared that "inmates of the privately run prison regularly appear at the infirmary with black eyes, broken noses or jaws or perforated eardrums from beatings by the poorly paid, poorly trained guards or from fights with other boys. Meals are so meager that many boys lose weight. Clothing is so scarce that boys fight over shirts and shoes. Almost all the teachers are uncertified, instruction amounts to as little as an hour a day, and until recently there were no books." (Conditions in Louisiana facilities have reportedly improved since that time, though the state's youth corrections agency remains under federal supervision.)

"Do you ever think about running?" the judge repeats.

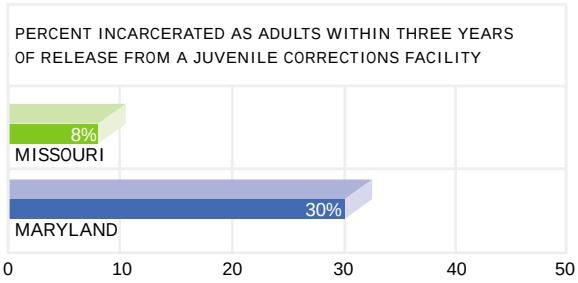
The question is posed to a tall, slender 16-year-old with a speech impediment and deep scars criss-crossing his face.

"I did when I first got here," the boy says. "I was making my plan. But then I saw that the other kids weren't going anywhere, they were thinking about their futures. And I saw that the staff here really cared. So I changed my mind.

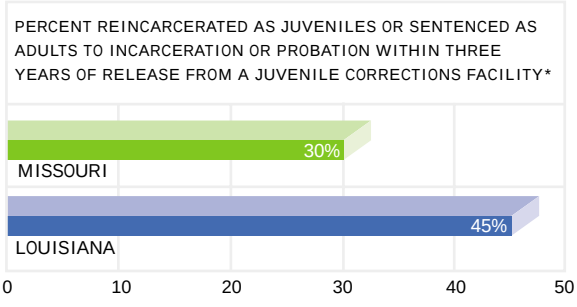
"I'm in here because I stole a car and crashed it going 85 miles an hour," the boy continued, his voice suddenly trembling. "I need to get this surgery finished. I need to make some different choices. I don't want to spend the rest of my life running."

That evening, at a going away dinner in downtown Kansas City, Louisiana representative Diane Winston stood up at a podium and confessed that "until now, this issue of juvenile justice has just been words and numbers to me. But this tour has really put a human face on the issue for me. It's a face of hope."

JUVENILE RECIDIVISM:
Missouri vs. Other States

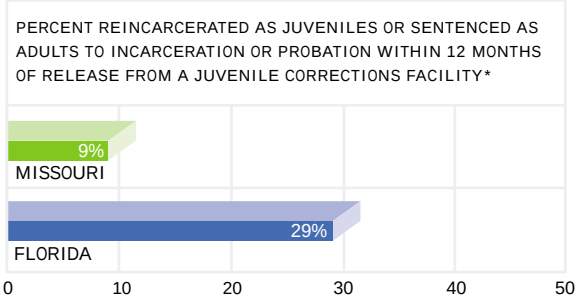


Sources: Missouri Division of Youth Services and Maryland Department of Juvenile Justice.



*These figures do not include youth returned to juvenile custody on technical violations.

Sources: Missouri Division of Youth Services and Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections.



*These figures do not include youth returned to juvenile custody on technical violations.

Sources: Missouri Division of Youth Services and Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

At Northwest, Dawson earned a GED, made plans to attend college and play football, and acquired a new demeanor of thoughtfulness and self-respect. In April 2002, a month after leaving the facility, Dawson explained that "I'm glad [for my time at Northwest]. I learned a lot there. I got to chance to think about my priorities, become more of a man."

But Dawson had not lifted a finger yet to pursue college or find work. He partied with friends, stayed out till all hours and then slept till noon in his step-parents' large but crumbling prairie box home. Still, he insisted that he would never return to the corner drug trade—the vocation of choice for most of his neighborhood peers.

"It's just not tempting to me," he said. "I know I've got skills. I've got a future, and I'm not going to do anything that could put me in prison and take that away from me."

Asked if he also worried about the morality of selling drugs, Dawson paused a moment, then responded: "Honestly, most of the reason I won't do it is for me, but yeah, I know what drugs do. When a little kid don't have no mommy or daddy because they're off doing drugs, that ain't right. I don't want to be part of that."

Despite his strong words, Dawson never applied to college. He even declined to interview for subsidized jobs lined up by DYS staff. And sadly, as his aftercare period ended in the summer of 2002, both Dawson's service coordinator and a DYS tracker spotted him on a notorious drug corner.

Tales like Dawson's leave Mark Steward philosophical—but no less certain of Missouri's unconventional, smaller-is-better approach to juvenile corrections.

"All we can do is to give these kids a chance," Steward says. "We teach them to look at themselves. We put them in a safe and stable and supportive environment—some of them for the first time in their lives. We help them see opportunities and make choices about their futures, but in the end it's still up to them.

"With us, they have an opportunity. Send them to a typical training school, where staff intimidates them and they have to fight to survive, and they've got no shot."

Before becoming editor of ADVOCASEY, *Dick Mendel authored three national reports on juvenile justice and youth crime prevention for the American Youth Policy Forum.*